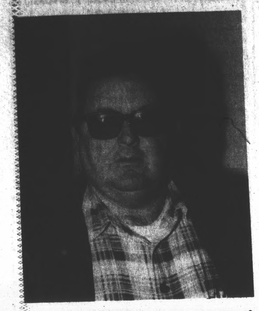

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NOTE THE CHANGE OF PLACE

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Pauline Gunter

Local woman relieves stress by writing poetry

By FRANCES ABBITT

A local physician at one time had a little saying hanging on the wall of his office that read, "The hurriedier I go the behinder I get." Doesn't that say it all for most of us?

Stress, mental and emotional pressure, seems to have us all hopping. We're always in a hurry to get on with our appointed tasks, in a hurry to get on with our lives and at the same time try to escape the pressures, problems and tragedies that are an inevitable part of life.

A cerain amount of stress is necessary or we just might doze our time away in a state of complacency. But when the big things do come....and they will, then what do we do? Pray? Work? Kiek and scream? Each individual has his or her own way of handling the valleys through which we must pass.

Some people eat....everything in sight when a crisis comes in their lives. Others, can't eat. One woman cleans...polishing and scrubbing away her grief and frustration.

One Appomattox County woman, Pauline Gunter, has her own way of dealing with the problems she faces. First she prays and then she writes poem after poem, pouring out the grief, the loneliness, the uncertainty. Then, when the happy times come, she writes again, expressing her joy, the goodness of God and all the things bringing her happiness and peace.

Pauline has written a lot....there have been a lot of problems and a lot of happiness to pour out on paper. But last year she faced the greatest tragedy she has ever known. She and her husband, Paul M. Gunter, Sr. lost their only son when he was accidently killed while at work.

"I'll never forget that day, last May 16, 1983," Pauline said. "My brother-in-law was the one to bring the bad news. My mind more or less took it in, but my heart wouldn't...couldn't accept it. I remember walking and praying, just walking and praying."

"My belief in the goodness of God has always been the most important thing in my life," she said. "I belong to Pleasant Grove Baptist Church. There I serve as assistant adult and youth Sunday School teacher, chairman of the nominating committee, and serve on the hospitality committee. I sing in the choir and with a small group of singers from the church. All this is important, but the most important thing is prayer," she added.

Some time back, Pauline was ordained as deaconess of her church but felt the governing body of the church should be made up of men so she does not serve in that capacity.

Since last May Pauline has written poem after poem, each one dealing with some aspect of the tragedy that took their son.

"Somehow when I put it all down on a piece of paper, it helps," she said. "It can't bring back my son; it can't take away the hurt, but it helps. Instead of hurrying through each day trying to forget, I stop, sit down and write."

"I have grieved before, but there is no pain to compare with the loss of a child. Only one who has experienced it can really know," Pauline said in a voice filled with emotion.

Before the accident, Pauline had written a lot of things. Poems about happy times, about problems with the family and writings about the greatness of God, but now all of her poems reflect her grief and loss.

"I didn't want this story written about me to seek pity for myself; I only want others to know about the goodness of God and that if we try He will show us a way to deal with our problems," she said. "No more hurrying, trying to escape the inevitable, just time for prayer and a poem."

One of the first poems she composed following the death of her son was called "Monday's Child."

On a windy, dark morning in May
God called my only son away.
At the young age of twenty-seven...
He climbed the golden stairway to heaven.

He was doing his job, and doing it well
When out of the blue,
Death struck and he fell...
The hard ground caught him
And he lay in the rain.
No one knows if he suffered great pain.

He was all alone without family or friends,
Oh, what a way for his life to end.
He was born on a Monday,
And he died on the same,
I miss him so Lord....
But I'm so glad he came!

It is a dream of Pauline's to get her poetry published, someday, somehow. She doesn't know just how it will come about, but she hopes of it becoming a reality.

"I don't want my poems published for financial gain, after all, it might be that nobody would buy them. I would like to have them published for my family and as a tribute to Jasper (Paul, Jr.). I'd like that," Pauline said.

Many of her writings are in a lighter vein, expressing happiness, humor. . .

Her poem "Reflection" goes this way:

We live and breathe
We walk and talk...
As questions of whom we please-
But I ask you in all sincerity
Who is that old woman
Looking out of the mirror at me?

Pauline Gunter, praying, writing and dreaming.....never hurrying.

Pauline Gunter

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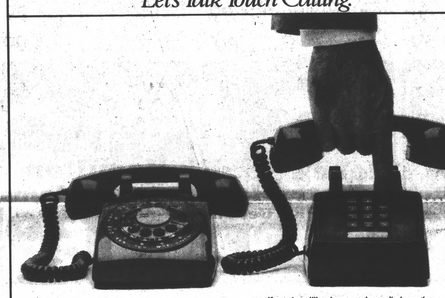

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For Robert Harding

Determination leads to success

There is no substitute for determination.

If you don't believe that just look at Robert Harding.

The Lynchburg College senior has had more than one opportunity to quit running track but continues to bounce back.

During his sophomore season, the Appomattox High School graduate broke his kneecap and missed all the indoor season and most of the outdoor.

He bounced back his junior year and was looking forward to a good senior compaign when knee problems flared up again and he was forced to undergo orthoscopic surgery in December.

"I've never considered quitting," said Harding. "I've been involved in sports since I was nine years old and I'm not ready to give it up.

"Some people thought I was finished but I was determined to come back. If hard work was what it was going to take, I was willing to do that to get back."

The Accounting major did more than just get back as he placed second in the Old Dominion Athletic Conference in the 55 meter run and also ran a leg on the winning 400 meter and 1600 meter relay teams, during the indoor championships.

In the opening outdoor meet March 16 he tallied 16½ points in leading LC to wins over Francis Marion and Towson State and for his efforts was named LC Athlete of the Week for the period Mar. 14-21.

"A lot of kids would have given up, but not Robert," said LC coach Jack Toms. "He came back after that operation and really worked hard to get his leg back in shape."

"He is one of our tri-captains and he deserves that honor. He's one of those guys that you are glad you had a chance to work with."

The Concord, Va. native almost ended up going to school somewhere else, as he admitted. "At one time I seriously considered going to Bridgewater.

"In high school my first love was football and I really thought about going there to continue playing in college.

"But during my senior year I was talking to my assistant track coach, (Jim Crawford, a 1976 LC graduate), and I asked him if he thought that I could be competitive in collegiate competition.

"He said I could and set up an appointment for me with coach Toms. After I visited the campus and talked with coach Toms I was convinced that LC was the place that I wanted to go."

Harding has always been a competitor as he admitted, "when I first went out for football I was the smallest guy on the team."

"I was determined that I was going to get bigger and become a starter."

"I hit the weights hard that summer and gained 21 pounds. I played a lot my junior year and by my senior year, I was a starter."

The 6'2", 180 pounder is never happy with just achieving a goal, as he admitted, "I'm never satisfied. If I do well, it's not good enough. I want to try to achieve more and that is not just in

Robert Harding

"My first two semesters here I made honorable mention Dean's List and I was determined to do better. I just missed Dean's List by a couple hundredths of a point the first semester of my sophomore year, but I've made it the last three semesters."

Harding has realized that his collegiate athletic career is rapidly drawing to a close but is the first to admit, "I'll have to be involved in some kind of sport -racquet ball or something.

"I can't see myself not competing in something."

Before annual school rush

Get birth certificates now

Parents whose child will enter school for the first time next fall are urged to apply now for their child's birth certificate before the annual school rush. Pre-school registration has already begun in some areas of the state.

Requests for birth certificates may be made by letter or by completing an application form, which is available from the local health departments. All requests must be sent to the Virginia Department of Health, Bureau of Vital Records, Box 1000, Richmond, Virginia 23208-1000.

State public health officials remind parents that the vital records fee is now $5 per copy. The fee should be included for each certificate requested.

Many requests currently being received in the state Health Department's Bureau of Vital Records office in Richmond contain checks or money orders in the amount of the old fee, which was $3. These are returned to the applicant for the additional amount. The new fee became effective in July 1983 as a result of the 1983 General Assembly.

Requests by letter must include the following information: The child's full name, date of birth, place of birth, full name of father, full maiden name of mother, and return address.

If a child was born in another state, the birth certificate request must be sent to the vital records office in the state's capital city.

The Bloodmobile is coming!

Friday, April 20 - 12 noon until 6 p.m

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CHRISTOPHER JOSEPH MEADOWS, age 3, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Roger Meadows of Richmond and the grandson of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Meadows of Appomattox, did his bit for the cause of Muscular Dystrophy recently. Chris, along with 20 of his friends at the Country Day Care Center participated in a Hop-A-Thon for the benefit of Muscular Dystrophy research. Chris is also the grandson of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Taylor of Richmond. (Photo courtesy of the Richmond News Leader)

APR